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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

DDI #7211-82
7 September 1982

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: [REDACTED] A/NIO/NESA

SUBJECT: The Dynamics of Arab Summitry

1. The outcome of Arab summit conference in Fez will play a critical role in determining Arab reaction to President Reagan's new peace initiative. The results of Arab summits often set the tone for Arab diplomacy for years to come and, once enshrined, are very difficult to overturn. For example, the 1974 summit's decision--the Rabat formula--to give the PLO sole negotiating rights for the West Bank still stands in the way of bringing Jordan into the peace process and the 1978 decisions to oust Egypt--the Baghdad summit--keep Mubarak outside Arab decisionmaking councils.

2. The need for a consensus has traditionally given the radicals--especially Syria--a key spoiler role at summits. Summits always agree on the lowest common denominator, which in Arab politics is usually a negative rejectionist posture rather than a positive viewpoint. President Assad's mere refusal to attend last year's summit scuttled the Saudi peace plan.

3. So far Assad has avoided any official comments on the Reagan plan but the government-controlled press has been negative, labeling it a "new maneuver" to revive Camp David and trumpeting its rejection by Palestinian radicals (PFLP and DFLP). Damascus probably is annoyed that the US has made no explicit mention of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. Assad may fear the plan will entice King Hussein into the talks and leave Syria further isolated against Israel. Nonetheless, he has not committed himself to a complete rejection.

4. The moderates--Jordan, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia--will doubtless press Arafat to take a positive line and resist Syrian pressures. [REDACTED]

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5. Arab summitry is unpredictable. The interaction among the leaders is always difficult to gauge and the talks take place behind a veil of secrecy. The most likely outcome of the Fez talks is likely to be an

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This Memo is classified
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ambiguous statement open to varying interpretations, not a clearcut endorsement of the US initiative. It may well sound negative at first reading by reiterating support for all past summit decisions, but may be more flexible upon careful examination and once the players begin interpreting the summit's meaning. It is important our policymakers understand this point.

- In any case the Israelis will seek to trumpet the negatives to give the appearance of Arab rejection. Tel Aviv will argue that any negative Arab commentary means the Reagan plan has reached a dead end.

The summit's other results may include some formula for slowly ending the Arab League mandate for Syria's role in Lebanon and a mechanism for gradually reintegrating Egypt into the League.

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